# EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES

# Construct Progression

**DOMAIN**: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**CLAIM**: Students communicate about and use strategies to regulate responses to their own emotions.

**Domain:** Social-Emotional Development
**Construct:** Emotion Regulation Strategies

## Background Information

Children express and manage a range of emotions in their daily lives. For the purpose of the progression, there is no right or wrong emotion that children can express. When we refer to *emotions,* we are referencing an internal experience—not necessarily an observable phenomenon. It is the <u>expression</u> of an emotion through words, gestures, and/or behaviors that helps an observer understand the emotion or emotions that a child may be experiencing. Thus, when "behavior" is mentioned, it is inferred that emotion is the underpinning of the behavior.

Children learn about emotions and related social skills through a variety of mechanisms. In some schools and/or classes, instruction in emotion is intentional and explicit, either through a specific program or an approach that has prescribed teaching practices and strategies (e.g., morning meetings, positive language, classroom organization); in others, emotion learning happens more implicitly as part of children's growing internalization of school and classroom norms and management. The terminology used to reference emotion education will differ depending on the approach, but common terms include *social-emotional learning* and *character education.* Promotion of social-emotional development does not necessarily need to occur within a given framework, and it is often embedded in other instructional activities. For example, children learn about emotions through adult and peer modeling of appropriate behavior, through dialogue about emotions and how to solve social-emotional problems, by encouraging and guiding through perspective-taking, and by offering alternative ways in which a child can think or act in a situation. There are many more ways in which teachers can teach and children can learn about emotions.

## Rationale

Emotion regulation, or being able to control one's emotions, involves children initiating, inhibiting, or modulating their feelings. It plays a fundamental role in thought and behavior in the school context and underlies a range of critical school related skills. Emotion regulation is what allows young children to stay focused and engaged throughout their school day, where they are likely to encounter a number of challenges that activate emotional arousal (Blair & Diamond, 2008). For example, children often have to negotiate taking turns while using classroom materials or participate in activities in which not every child wins or scores the highest. In addition, emotional arousal is critical to children's engagement in learning—children must be emotionally aroused in order to be engaged in an activity; however, the right amount is critical. Too much can distract and interfere with learning, whereas too little can lead to disengagement (Blair & Raver, 2012). Thus, regulating emotions during school activities becomes critical for all children's learning. And there is, in fact, research that finds children who successfully manage emotions are more likely to be successful in school, as it can impact focus and attention, planning and finishing tasks, and having positive relationships with peers (Blair, 2002; Denham, 2006; Howse, Calkins, Anastopoulos, Keane, & Shelton, 2003; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2007). Thus, when children regulate their emotions, they are able to work in collaborative groups and engage in learning behaviors such as asking questions and offering ideas to a group.

We also know that children with greater self-regulation in kindergarten are more skilled in reading and math in later grades (McClelland, Acock, & Morrison, 2006). Being able to regulate emotions, however, is not necessarily a self-taught skill; some children have a relatively easy time managing their emotional arousal, whereas others find it very challenging to modulate emotions. Teachers can play an important role in developing children's emotion regulation skills by teaching them strategies for managing their arousal. Teaching emotion regulation strategies may occur through modeling, using cues, such as directions or gestures to help children attend to their emotions and related behavior, and by scaffolding support for regulation by gradually withdrawing support (Florez, 2011). Many children need support when learning to regulate emotions and are able to employ suggested strategies over time, moving from reactionary behaviors to more reflective ones. This construct progression addresses the ways in which children use strategies to regulate their emotions with support from others.

**Domain:** Social-Emotional Development
**Construct:** Emotion Regulation Strategies

| Emotion Regulation Strategies | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Understanding** | **Skills** | **Performance Descriptors** | **Example** |
| Children understand that verbal and nonverbal strategies including external support by a teacher, parent, or peer can be used to help regulate the experience of emotions (e.g., reminder to take a deep breath and count to 5 when frustrated) and the expression of emotions (e.g., reminder to use an inside voice). | A. When offered strategies for regulating the expression of emotions, begins to use the strategies offered **with continual support**. | Students who begins to use strategies for regulating the expression of emotions when offered typically either do not use the strategies or require additional support from the teacher or support staff. | *Ms. Walker has set up a reward system chart on the wall to help students in the classroom adhere to the classroom expectations (e.g., listening and being respectful while others are talking). During a lesson, Damion becomes excited and interrupts Ms. Walker. She points to the wall several times to remind him of the reward system chart, and he makes an effort to contain his excitement, but needs multiple reminders to do so.*<br><br>*For several days during book-share time, Ellen has been shouting comments rather than waiting to be called on.  The teacher offers her a strategy (sit on hand) to moderate her impulsive shout-outs, but Ellen has not been successful in implementing. The teacher determines that Ellen may need more concrete support, so decides to role play the situation with Ellen.  The teacher recreates the book-share scenario and takes the role of a student who calls out (Sally Shout-out).  Ellen's role is to redirect Sally to use the suggested strategy (sit on hand), resulting in the teacher's successful use of that strategy as a model for Ellen. The teacher may follow up by asking Ellen what she observed (strategy use).  For subsequent instances, Ellen needs a specific reminder (remember Sally Shout-out) of role play to continue to demonstrate the desired behavior.* |
| | B. When offered strategies for regulating the expression of emotions, consistently uses the strategies offered **with minimal support**. | Students who use strategies for regulating the expression of emotions when offered typically respond immediately to the support and adjust their behavior accordingly. | *Mrs. B understands that as her students engage in less structured classroom activities they may need some guidelines for acceptable behaviors.  During circle group, she and her students develop a list of pro-social behaviors to be displayed. When it's Andy's turn to work at the computer station, he expresses his joy by jumping up and down and yelling "Yaaa". Mrs. B points to the chart while reminding Andy of the agreement to "use inside voices" during instructional times. Andy immediately checks his behavior and moves quietly to the* |

**Domain:** Social-Emotional Development
**Construct:** Emotion Regulation Strategies

| Emotion Regulation Strategies | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Understanding** | **Skills** | **Performance Descriptors** | **Example** |
| | | | *computer area.* |
| | | | *Before introducing an activity, Mr. Lim reviews the non-verbal cues to remain calm and quiet (e.g., tapping the chest to signal a breathing technique) used in the classroom while students are working in a small group. During the activity, Aubrey becomes visibly frustrated while waiting her turn. Mr. Lim provides a non-verbal cue (e.g., taps his own chest) to remind her to use a pre-taught strategy (breathing) to reduce frustration. Aubrey responds to the reminder by using the strategy and remaining calm.* |
| Children understand that a variety of learned verbal and non-verbal strategies can be used flexibly to regulate the expression of emotions. | C. **Sometimes** uses learned strategies independently to regulate expression of emotions during routine activities. | A student who is remembering: 1) Sometimes uses learned strategies independently to regulate the expression of emotions during routine activities may need occasional reminders depending on the circumstance, OR 2) Has been observed to use only one emotion regulation strategy, OR 3) Can only use emotion regulation strategies in one setting. | *When about to yell out the answer to a question that Ms. Knight poses during a whole class lesson, Jorge checks himself and quietly says to himself, "Stop, think, and then raise your hand," before raising his hand to answer the question instead of yelling out his answer.* <br><br> *While Mrs. Yen is working with a small group for reading, Amy has a question about the task she needs to complete during her center work. Amy starts toward Mrs. Yen's reading group, but this time remembers the strategy Mrs. Yen taught the class: "Ask 3, then ask me". Amy decides to ask her teammate at the center rather than interrupt Mrs. Yen's instruction. She gets the information she needs to continue her work.* |
| | D. **Consistently** uses learned strategies independently to regulate the expression of emotions during routine activities. | A student who: (1) Consistently uses learned strategies independently to regulate the expression of emotions during routine activities demonstrates the strategies in multiple settings throughout the day, OR (2) Seems to be effectively managing the expression of his/her emotions without demonstrating obvious, visible | *Reese worked with her teacher on a strategy to check in with her emotional state (e.g., comparing how she's feeling to a car engine revving softly versus revving loudly) and when to respond to that emotional state with the related strategy (e.g., going to sit in the reading area when the "engine is revving loudly"). The teacher observes Reese going to the reading area after recess; when asked, she responds that she went to the reading area to "calm my engine".* <br><br> *Slater has been practicing a strategy during science inquiry* |

**Domain:** Social-Emotional Development
**Construct:** Emotion Regulation Strategies

| Emotion Regulation Strategies | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Understanding** | **Skills** | **Performance Descriptors** | **Example** |
| | | strategies. | *group activities to capture his thoughts by doodling instead of blurting out while someone else is talking or taking a turn. The teacher observes Slater using a journal to draw pictures and jot down "notes" while his group members are taking their turns doing the experiment. Slater is now able to regularly use this strategy during group activities to help him wait patiently and communicate positively with his group members.* <br><br> *Mr. Peters observes Khalid for a third time, this time during Field Day. Khalid is the first runner during the baton race and creates a big lead ahead of the other teams. His teammates are slower, however, and they end up coming in third. Khalid tells the other children that they tried really hard and moves on to his next event. Mr. Peters concludes, after this third time of observing Khalid deal with potential disappointment without any issues, that he must be using strategies to regulate his emotions.* |
| | E. **Independently** uses learned strategies for regulating emotions during complex contextual transitions (e.g., exposed to multiple stimuli simultaneously), to accomplish a different or new type of task, because of interruptions, or because of changes in the daily routines. | A student who: <br> (1) Uses learned strategies for regulating emotions during complex contextual transitions, to accomplish a different or new type of task, because of interruptions, or because of changes in the daily routines typically demonstrates the strategies regardless of the context, OR <br> (2) Appears to be managing the potential for emotional arousal typically elicited by such situations without demonstrating obvious, visible strategies | *When Mark's mother is coming in later for a classroom event (e.g. a "Parents and Careers" day), he begins to get excited in anticipation, but quickly sits on his hands and focuses on the task at hand.* <br><br> *Janae is in the computer lab when the fire alarm sounds. She is in the middle of an activity and feels frustrated because she wants to finish. Her classmates start going out the door but Janae stays in her seat. Janae remembers that when she's frustrated, taking a deep breath can help her to be less frustrated. She takes a deep breath (observed by the teacher) and then asks her teacher, "Will we come back so I can finish?"* <br><br> *Mrs. Trucci, informs her students that they will not be having Technology class today because there is a school-wide assembly instead. Mrs. Trucci watches the students who she knows enjoy the Technology class to see their reaction. Gavin sighs, and looks disappointed, but within minutes is back to his usual self again.* |

**Domain:** Social-Emotional Development
**Construct:** Emotion Regulation Strategies

| Emotion Regulation Strategies | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Understanding** | **Skills** | **Performance Descriptors** | **Example** |
| | | | *He says, "I need to cooperate," as he turns around towards the door and joins his classmates in line.* |

# Resources

Berger, A. (2011). Self-regulation: Brain, cognition, and development. American Psychological Association.

Blair, C. (2002). School readiness: Integrating cognition and emotion in a neurobiological conceptualization of children's functioning at school entry. *American Psychologist, 57*, 111–127.

Blair, C. & Raver, C. C. (2012). Child development in the context of adversity: experiential canalization of brain and behavior. *American Psychologist, 67*(4), 309-318.

Bowman, B. & Moore, E. (Eds.). (2006). *School readiness and social-emotional development: Perspectives on cultural diversity.* Washington, DC: National Black Child Development Institute, Inc.

Center for Early Care and Education Research—Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL; 2011). Research brief #7. Social- emotional development in dual language learners: A critical review of the research. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Author.

Denham, S. A. (2006). The emotional basis of learning and development in early childhood education. In B. S. Spodek, O. N. (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (2nd ed., pp. 85-103). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Epstein, A.S. (2009). *Me, you, us: Social-emotional learning in preschool.* Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Press.

Evans, G.W. & Kim, P. (2012). Childhood poverty, chronic stress, self-regulation and coping. *Child Development Perspectives, 7*(1), 43-48.

Falk, B. (Ed.). (2012). *Defending childhood: Keeping the promise of early education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Florez, I. R. (2011). Developing young children's self-regulation through everyday experiences. *Young Children, 66*(4), 46-51.

**Domain:** Social-Emotional Development
**Construct:** Emotion Regulation Strategies

Galinsky, E. (2010). *Mind in the making*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, Publishers.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York: NY: Bantam Books.

Graziano, P.A., Calkins, S.D., & Keane, S.P. (2011). Sustained attention development during the toddlerhood to preschool period: Associations with toddlers' emotion regulation strategies and maternal behavior. *Infant and Child Development, 20*, 389-408.

Grolnick, W. S., Bridges, L. J., & Connell, J. P. (1996). Emotion regulation in two-year-olds: Strategies and emotional expression in four contexts. Child development, 67(3), 928-941.

Gross, J. J., & Feldman Barrett, L. (2011). Emotion generation and emotion regulation: One or two depends on your point of view. Emotion review, 3(1), 8- 16.

Howse, R., Calkins, S., Anastopoulos, A., Keane, S., & Shelton, T. Regulatory contributors to children's academic achievement. *Early Education and Development. 2003; 14*(1):101–119.

Landy, S. (2002). *Pathways to competence: Encouraging healthy social and emotional development in young children*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Li-Grining, C.P. (2012). The role of cultural factors in the development of Latino preschoolers' self-regulation. *Child Development Perspectives, 6*(3), 210-217.

Luchtel, M., Hughes, K., Luze, G., Richardson-Bruna, K., & Peterson, C. (2010). A comparison of teacher-rated classroom conduct, social skills, and teacher–child relationship quality between preschool English learners and preschool English speakers. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field*, *13*(2), 92-111, doi: 10.1080/15240751003737877

McClelland, M.M., Acock, A.C., & Morrison, F.J. (2006). The impact of kindergarten learning-related skills on academic trajectories at the end of elementary school. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 21,* 471–490.

McClelland, M.M. & Cameron, C.E. (2011). Self-regulation in early childhood: Improving conceptual clarity and developing ecologically valid measures. *Child Development Perspectives,6*(2), 136-142.

Putnam, S. P., Gartstein, M. A., & Rothbart, M. K. (2006). Measurement of fine-grained aspects of toddler temperament: The Early Childhood Behavior Questionnaire. Infant Behavior and Development, 29(3), 386-401.

Raikes, H. A., Robinson, J. L., Bradley, R. H., Raikes, H. H., & Ayoub, C. C. (2007). Developmental trends in self-regulation among low-income toddlers. Social Development, 16(1), 128-149.

**Domain:** Social-Emotional Development
**Construct:** Emotion Regulation Strategies

Raver, C.C., Garner, P.W. & Smith-Donald, R. (2007). The roles of emotion regulation and emotion knowledge for children's academic readiness: Are the links causal? In R. Pianta, M.J. Cox and K.L. Snow (Eds.) *School readiness and the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability*, pp. 121-148. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Riley, D., San Juan, R.R., Klinkner, J., & Ramminger, A. (2008). *Social and emotional development: Connecting science and practice in early childhood settings.* St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Ruff, H. A., & Capozzoli, M. C. (2003). Development of attention and distractibility in the first 4 years of life. Developmental psychology, 39(5), 877.

Ursache, A., Blair, C. & Raver, C.C. (2011). The promotion of self-regulation as a means of enhancing school readiness and early achievement in children at risk for school failure. *Child Development Perspectives,6*(2), 122-128.

Valiente, C., Swanson, J., & Eisenberg, N. (2011). Linking students' emotions and academic achievement: When and why emotions matter. *Child Development Perspectives,6*(2), 129-135.

Zhou, Q., Chen, S. H., & Main, A. (2011). Commonalities and differences in the research on children's effortful control and executive function: A call for an integrated model of self-regulation. *Child Development Perspectives, 6*(2), 112-121.

Zins, J., Payton, J. W., Weissberg R. P., & O 'Brien, M. U. (2007). Social and emotional learning and successful school performance. In G. Matthews, M. Zeidner, & R. D. Roberts (Eds.) *Emotional intelligence: Known's and unknowns* (pp. 376-395). New York: Oxford University Press.